

# *Understanding the Connecticut DMR Home and Community Based Services Waivers:*

## An Introduction to Your Hiring Choices



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Deputy Commissioner Kathryn duPree



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# Dedication

We would like to dedicate this manual to the individuals who have committed themselves to making self-directed supports and services possible for all people with intellectual disabilities in Connecticut. Through creative examples, the early pioneers of self-determination showed us how people with intellectual disabilities could make their lives better by assuming greater control and responsibility for their individual budgets and by self-directing their support services. We appreciate their efforts.

We are pleased to offer ***Understanding the Connecticut DMR Home and Community Based Services Waivers: An Introduction to Your Hiring Choices*** to the people served by the CT Department of Mental Retardation. We hope that this guide will help many more individuals with intellectual disabilities to experience the pride, accomplishment, and growth that can occur through the provision of self-directed services.

## Acknowledgements

**We would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance in developing this guide. Their assistance was invaluable.**

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The department is interested in hearing suggestions about how we can provide written information in accessible and easy-to-understand formats to people with intellectual disabilities. Please contact Robin Wood, DMR Self-Determination Director at (203) 806-8770 or [robin.wood@po.state.ct.us](mailto:robin.wood@po.state.ct.us) to share your thoughts and ideas.

# Dear Consumers & Family Members

On behalf of DMR, it is my pleasure to share with you the **second manual** for consumers and families that explains the **Home and Community Based Services Waivers: An Introduction to Your Hiring Choices**. I am very excited with the progress the department has made to give all of you more flexibility and choice about how you arrange services and supports that are funded by this agency.

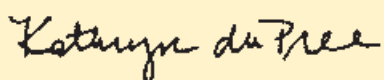
Over the past several years, more individuals have had the opportunity to direct their own plans and to decide the best way to have services provided to them. We have learned a great deal about making this process simple and successful from those of you who were our self-determination pioneers.

***This manual provides an excellent step-by-step process for all aspects of self-directing your own supports.*** Self-determination allows you to select your own staff and make sure they know they work directly for you. When you do this, you have a responsibility to be an employer. This manual has been developed to provide you with the information you will need to do this successfully, while understanding your responsibilities.

***In the manual, you will learn about recruiting, interviewing, hiring and training staff.*** You will also understand the steps you need to take if you need to terminate a working relationship with someone. All of this starts with developing an individual plan and budget, which helps you clarify what you want to work on and how you want to use your resources. Once you know that, it is easier to decide what type of person will be most suited to work for you. Always remember that you are in charge of this process and your Case Manager and others are available to make sure you are satisfied with your services and the staff who support you.

I hope you find this information helpful and easy to understand. ***You have a tremendous opportunity to decide what your future will be.*** We at DMR want to provide you with the support you need to reach your goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn duPree". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathryn duPree, Deputy Commissioner  
CT DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION

# Introduction

This guidebook is the second waiver guide to be developed by the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR). The first guidebook titled, ***Understanding the Connecticut DMR Home and Community Based Services Waivers: A Guidebook for***

***Consumers and Their Families*** explains the department's new Medicaid Waiver System. The first guide provides an overview of the supports and services that are available from the department and identifies the processes that are used to assist individuals to get needed supports and services. We urge you to read ***Understanding the Connecticut DMR Home and Community Based Services Waivers: A Guidebook for Consumers and Their Families*** before reading this second guide.



This second guide, ***Understanding the Connecticut DMR Home and Community Based Services Waivers: An Introduction to Your Hiring Choices*** explains the **choices you have for hiring** individuals or agencies to provide waiver services for you. It also provides a brief summary of the choices, actions, and activities that take place when you decide to hire and manage your own employees. ***The purpose of this second guide is to help you to make informed decisions about your waiver services and to assist those of you who choose to self-direct your services to become confident and effective employers.***

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# SECTION 1

## Your Hiring Choices

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*This section of the guide describes the choices you have for hiring employees and for the management of your waiver services:*

Self-Direction:  
Direct Hire and  
Management of Employees

Agency With Choice

Traditional Vendor Agencies

A Combination of Approaches

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## Your Hiring Choices

Once you've become eligible for waiver services, have been allocated funds for an individual budget through the Level of Need (LON) tool, and have identified the services that will best meet your needs, you and your family can **choose who you want to hire to provide services to you and how you want to be involved in the management of your services.**

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If you're still unsure about what supports and services are best for you, we encourage you to read our first waiver guide titled, "Understanding the Connecticut DMR Home and Community Based Services Waivers: A Guidebook for Consumers and Their Families," or you can request assistance from your case manager to help you make informed decisions about your waiver services. You will need to decide what type of services are right for you, before you can consider who you will hire to provide services and how these services will be managed.

You can choose from among a number of different hiring and management options, including:

- **SELF DIRECTION:** If you select this option, you become the employer of the people you choose to hire to provide supports for you. As the employer, you are responsible for the training, supervision, and management of the people you hire. This option **gives you the most control over your supports, but also the most responsibility.** You are able to choose your own employees and have direct control over who works with you, their schedules, and their routines. In this model, you also decide how much to pay your employees and what benefits, (e.g. health insurance) they receive. If you choose this option, you can also use up to \$500 per year of your budget to purchase non-waiver supports.



- **AGENCY WITH CHOICE:** An Agency With Choice is an agency that agrees to hire the individual you choose to provide services for you. This individual becomes an employee of the agency and the agency agrees to help you train and manage your staff. The agency may also agree to negotiate the rate to be paid for the service or the wage to be paid to the person you want to hire. When you choose to use an Agency With Choice you agree to work as a partner with the agency in setting the employee's schedule and routines and in training and supervising the individual. However, the agency ultimately retains the final say in decisions about the employee, since the agency retains the responsibility of being the individual's employer.

*more choices*



*"It's not always easy managing staff, but I love being the boss!"*

JOYCE RIVERS, Consumer

- **VENDOR AGENCY:** A vendor agency is a traditional provider that is the employer of the individuals that will provide services for you. DMR will use the funds that are allocated to you in your individual budget to pay the vendor agency at the established rates for service. The vendor agency is responsible for hiring, training and managing the employees that support you. Vendor agencies typically have set hours when they can provide services to you and are not required to give you a choice of which employee will work with you.

Or, you can use a **combination of the above approaches** to meet your individual needs. For example, you may choose to use some of your allocated funds to purchase employment waiver services you need from a traditional vendor agency, and use other funds in your budget to hire your own respite staff, or have an Agency With Choice provide other waiver services to you.

*It is important that you think carefully about these hiring options. Each option provides you with a different amount of control, authority and self-determination.*

## Your Hiring Choices, CONTINUED

It is important that you think carefully about these hiring options. Each option provides you with a different amount of control, authority and self-determination.

You are the expert and know what hiring option will work best for you. Feel free to ask questions, request additional information, take the time to talk to others who have chosen different hiring options than those you are familiar with, and do whatever you need to do to get the help you need to make an informed choice about this important decision!

Keep in mind that you can also change the way you arrange your services and who delivers them at any time. There is no need to feel concerned that your decision might be the right one for now, but you may change your mind some time in the future.

*more choices*



*"I like to have the freedom of choice to pick my own support staff. It makes me feel important and feel in control of my life. I have always been told I couldn't do things because I have disabilities, that I was too slow. Now that I have a good job and hire my own support I feel I am respected by others and my family."*

JOSSIE TORRES, Consumer



*Remember . . .*

*You can always  
change your mind!*



## SECTION 2

### Supports for Self-Direction

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*This section of the guide describes the supports that are available to you when you choose Self-Direction: Direct Hire and Management of Employees.*

DMR Support Brokers

Family & Individual  
Consultation Services

Fiscal Intermediary Services

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## Supports for Self-Direction

So, you've **looked at all of your hiring choices** and have made a decision to hire and manage your own employees, or to use an **Agency With Choice**. ***Congratulations on choosing to self-direct your supports and services!***

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You've identified the services that will best meet your needs, and thought about all the different ways that you can manage these services. You've learned about how traditional vendor agencies manage the services they provide and considered the **"Agency With Choice"** model. You've also thought about using a combination of different approaches. After thinking it over, you may have decided that you want greater freedom and flexibility in the way your services are provided and feel ready to take on more responsibility in your life. You may have decided that hiring and managing your own staff is the right step for you!

**Hiring and managing your own employees is a big step** and we know it won't always be easy, so ***we created some new supports to help you in your new role.***

**DMR SUPPORT BROKERS:** You can choose to have a DMR support broker or purchase an independent broker service to help manage the services and supports you receive. A DMR support broker is a case manager who has a smaller size caseload, so that he or she has the time to provide you with both case management services and

additional assistance needed to hire and manage your supports.

**INDEPENDENT BROKERS (FICS):** An independent broker is a person that you hire directly, or a service you hire from a qualified vendor to help you to recruit and supervise employees. This service called Family and Individual Consultation and Support (FICS) is available under the DMR HCBS Waivers. You may use the FICS services for a short period of time to assist you in setting up your new supports, or it can be an ongoing service that you purchase to help coordinate your supports and assist you in your new role of hiring and managing your own employees. If you purchase FICS services, you will keep your DMR case manager. Your DMR case manager will provide case management services including assistance to develop and implement your individual plan. However, your case manager generally will not be able to dedicate the time to assist you to hire and manage your employees.

***Table 1 explains the differences between the role of a case manager, a broker and a FICS.***

## TABLE 1

DMR Case Management	DMR Broker	Family & Individual Consultation & Support (FICS)
<p>Your case manager is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HELP YOU</b> to learn about choices and options for services</li> <li>• <b>HELP YOU</b> with planning and preparing your budget</li> <li>• <b>HELP YOU</b> to arrange your supports and services</li> <li>• <b>HELP WITH</b> necessary documentation</li> <li>• <b>ONCE YOU</b> are getting services, checks to make sure they are meeting your needs and that you are happy with them</li> <li>• <b>HELP YOU</b> to make changes to your plan and budget if your situation changes</li> <li>• <b>HELP YOU</b> by advocating on your behalf, if you need it</li> </ul>	<p>A DMR broker does all of the things that a case manager does. She or he will also provide the following recruitment and hiring supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ASSISTS YOU</b> to become an employer and work with your Fiscal Intermediary</li> <li>• <b>ASSISTS YOU</b> to recruit employees</li> <li>• <b>ASSISTS YOU</b> to hire employees</li> <li>• <b>ASSISTS YOU</b> to set employee schedules and to complete employee timesheets</li> <li>• <b>ASSISTS YOU</b> to train and manage employees</li> <li>• <b>ASSISTS YOU</b> to develop your own self-advocacy skills</li> <li>• <b>ASSISTS YOU</b> in negotiating other arrangements with traditional vendor agencies or an Agency With Choice if you work with them as well</li> </ul>	<p>This option provides you with the ability to use your Individual Budget to hire an independent (non-DMR) broker to assist you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RECRUIT, HIRE AND MANAGE</b> employees as outlined in the DMR broker column.</li> <li>• <b>Your assigned case manager retains responsibility for all case management duties identified in column 1.</b></li> </ul>

## Supports for Self-Direction, CONTINUED

**FISCAL INTERMEDIARIES:** When you hire your own employees or use an Agency With Choice, you are required to use a Fiscal Intermediary (FI). This service helps both you and DMR to manage individual budgets and helps you to manage all of the financial responsibilities of being an employer. You can choose which FI you want to help you pay employees, manage taxes and complete additional employer responsibilities. Your case manager can provide you with information about the available FI's.

The DMR broker and FI services are provided by DMR at no cost to you, but you will need to use funds from your individual budget if you decide to purchase FICS services. You can ask your case manager to explain the pro's and con's of choosing a broker or deciding to hire a FICS, and to help you select a FI. Or, you can have family, friends, or others help you to make decisions about your supports.



*The Fiscal Intermediary helps you to manage all of the financial responsibilities of being an employer.*



## SECTION 3

### Paying for Your Supports and Services

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*This section of the guide provides information about the tools DMR uses to help you plan for your future and manage the funds that are allocated to you.*

Individual Plan

Individual Budget

## Paying for Your Support and Services

Your **Individual Plan** and your **Individual Budget** are the tools we use to help make sure you get the services you need and use the money allocated to you in the best way possible. ***Your case manager, or DMR broker, or independent broker (FICS) if you choose to hire one, will help make sure that your Individual Plan and Individual Budget are developed and implemented in a timely and correct manner.***

**INDIVIDUAL PLAN (IP):** Each person served by DMR has a individual plan that describes his or her supports and services. The comprehensiveness of your individual plan will depend on your assessed level of need, your resource allocation and on the comprehensiveness of the supports and services you receive. Your case manager will contact you and your family member before your planning meeting to help you to prepare for the plan, to go over important areas you want to address, and to ensure all the needed information is available. Your case manager will also ensure that all of the sections of your IP are documented correctly.

*Every IP includes the following sections:*

- the Information Profile
- the Personal Profile
- the Future Vision
- Current and New Assessments
- the Action Plan
- a Summary of the Supports and Services provided,
- and a section on how your plan will be evaluated and monitored.



Your IP will also need to include IP attachments that describe the qualifications and training your employees must have to support you, and you will be asked to document your emergency back-up plan, a plan that outlines what you will do if your employees don't arrive to work as planned.

**INDIVIDUAL BUDGET:** Once your IP is completed, your case manager, DMR broker and/or independent broker (FICS) will assist you to complete an individual budget. He or she will help make sure that your budget includes a line item for each waiver service listed in your IP, as well a line item to pay for employee wages and taxes, to cover worker's compensation costs if needed, and to pay for any additional expenses such as recruitment costs, training costs, or insurance. Your case manager will also help you to make sure that your budget adheres to DMR's waiver cost standards. You can request a copy of the cost standards if you are interested in learning more about these cost guidelines.

There may be some items in your budget that will need prior approval before they can be authorized in your budget. The cost standards explain which items require prior approval. Your case manager or broker will submit prior approval requests through DMR's prior approval process. Your budget cannot be authorized until the prior approval process has been

completed and you have received notice that your request has been approved. When you hire your own employees, you can also use \$500 of your budget to purchase non-waiver services. This \$500 does not have to be approved through the prior approval process, but must adhere to the cost-standard guidelines.

Your individual budget is the document that provides your Fiscal Intermediary with a guide as to what payments can be made and to whom, so it is important that the information in your budget is always up-to-date. You can make

changes in your budget at any time, but agreements with vendor agencies cannot be switched without a 30 day notice. You should always contact your case manager or DMR broker if you want to make changes in your budget, because there are policies and procedures that must be followed to approve the

changes that you would like to make. Your case manager will also make sure that your IP is updated to reflect whatever changes have been made in your budget.



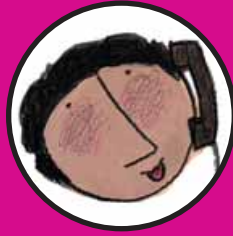
## Paying for Your Support and Services, CONTINUED

Every month your FI will send you a financial report. This report provides you with specific information about how much you have spent to date, your account balance and your annual budget. The FI will also send your case manager or broker a copy of this monthly report. If you have questions about these reports, you should contact your FI or case manager. It's important that you work closely with your FI to help ensure that the people who provide services to you get paid in a timely way and that you stay within your budget allocation.



### *Remember . . .*

*your case manager, DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) and your FI are available to answer any budget questions that you may have.*



## SECTION 4

### Becoming An Employer

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*This section of the guide provides information that will help you to better understand DMR's expectations for people who choose Self-Direction.*

#### Individualized Support Agreement

Sponsoring Person

Employer State and  
Federal Registration

## Becoming An Employer

When you choose to hire your own employees you become the **employer of record** for employee tax purposes. ***Your FI will help you to manage all of the paperwork that comes with being an employer.***

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### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT AGREEMENT

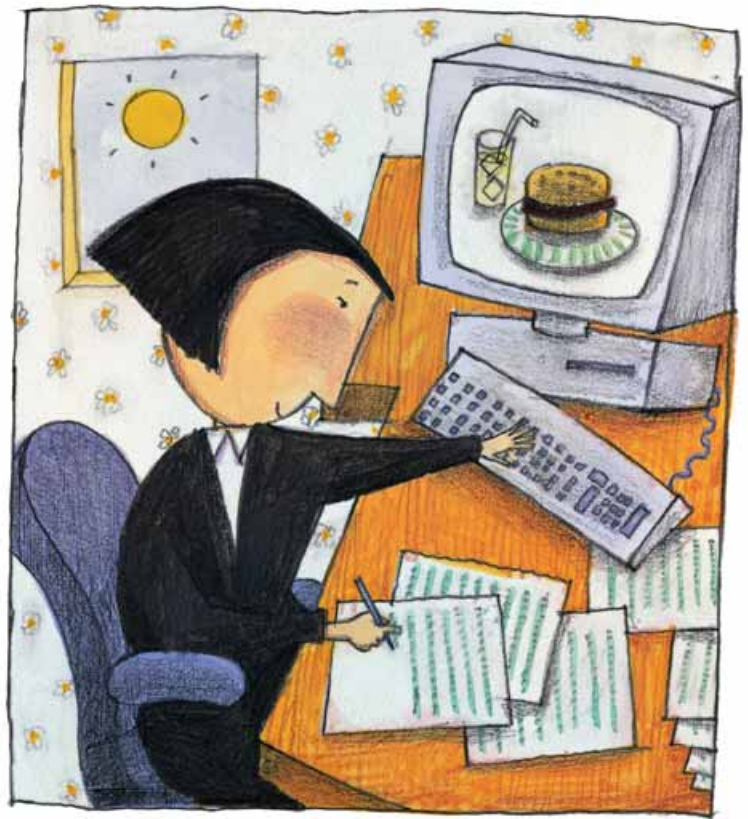
**(ISA):** When you choose to hire and manage your own employees you will be asked to sign an Individual Support Agreement (ISA). The ISA lists what you agree to do in your role as employer and explains what you will need to do to properly manage your individual budget. It is important that you review this document carefully so that you fully understand your employer role and responsibilities. You can contact your case manager, broker or your regional Self Determination Director, if you need help understanding any of the information contained in the ISA.

**SPONSORING PERSON:** You may decide that you want to choose someone else to sign your ISA and other related paperwork. This person is referred to by the department as a ***"sponsoring person."*** This could be a guardian if you have one, a family member, a friend, or anyone else that you assign. It is important to note



that Medicaid rules state that a person who is paid with Medicaid funds to provide waiver services to you (an employee you hire or someone you contract with) cannot be a sponsoring person. The sponsoring person signing your ISA becomes the employer of record and agrees to uphold all of the conditions listed in the ISA. If you or a sponsoring person do not sign the ISA, then you cannot self-direct your services and hire employees.

DMR maintains the right to terminate an ISA when you or your sponsoring person does not adhere to the terms of the ISA, or when we feel you or your sponsoring person are not making decisions that reflect your best interests. ISA termination decisions are made by DMR's central office Waiver Policy Unit and can be appealed. Terminations are used rarely, but are an important safeguard that helps to ensure that you receive services that keep you safe and healthy and that meet your needs. Your case manager or DMR broker would work with you on trying to resolve those kind of issues before we took such an action.



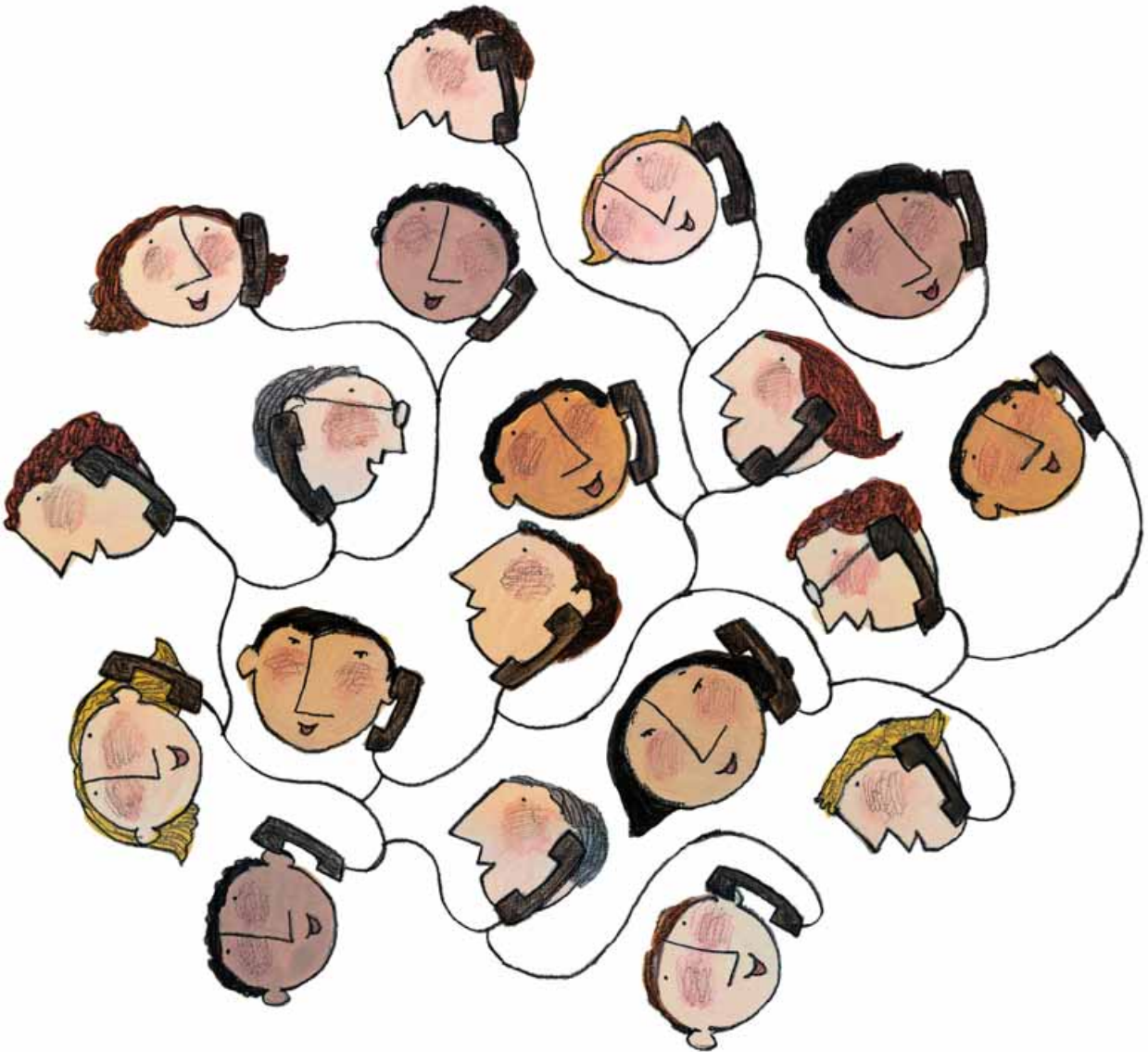
*Your FI will help you to manage all of the paperwork that comes with being an employer . . .*

## Becoming An Employer, CONTINUED

### EMPLOYER STATE AND FEDERAL REGISTRATION:

Your FI will assist whomever signed the ISA to complete all of the paperwork needed to become an official employer with the state and federal government. The signed paperwork allows the state and federal government to keep track of whether labor laws are being

followed and that you are paying your employee's taxes correctly. You don't need to worry about this though, because the department is paying your FI to make sure that you are completing all of your employer paperwork correctly and on time!





## SECTION 5

### Recruiting Employees

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*This section of the guide provides you with information that will help you to find employees to work for you.*

Basic Employment Law

Hiring Restrictions

Job Descriptions

Recruitment Strategies

Interview Techniques

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# Recruiting Employees

You can hire people that you know, or you can recruit new employees. ***Your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) will assist you to find qualified employees to provide the services you need.***

**BASIC EMPLOYMENT LAW:** It's a good idea to learn some basic information about employment law and to make sure you fully understand DMR's hiring restrictions before you start creating advertisements, interviewing potential employees, or offering someone a job. Your FI can provide you with useful information about basic employment laws. This information will include guidelines about what you can and cannot say in interviews, important rules you need to follow when paying employees, and other important information such as how to avoid discrimination.



## HIRING RESTRICTIONS

*It's also important to know who you cannot hire. The following individuals cannot be paid to provide waiver services to you and should not be considered for employment by you:*

- **You cannot be paid to provide waiver services to yourself** or to direct and manage your waiver services.
- **Persons** with a substantiated history of abuse, neglect, or exploitation who are included **on the DMR Registry may not be hired** to provide any waiver services. Your FI will check the DMR Registry for all names that you submit.
- **You cannot pay your spouse or civil union partner** to provide waiver services to you.
- **You cannot pay your parent or legal guardian** (appointed by the state court) to provide waiver services to you. (\*Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis through DMR's prior approval process.)
- **You cannot pay your sponsoring person** to provide waiver services to you.

Although this list may seem to restrict a lot of people, remember that you are still able to hire lots of people that you could never hire before the self-direction option was offered by DMR!

**JOB DESCRIPTIONS:** Before you begin recruitment activities, it is a good idea to develop a job description that describes what you want your employee to do. A job description will provide useful information when you create advertisements and will be helpful to refer to when you develop a list of questions to ask during your interviews. A good job description will help you clearly state your expectations to potential job candidates. Clear expectations and good communication will help you to find and keep employees that are right for you! Your DMR broker or independent broker FICS can provide you with job description examples and can help you create your own job descriptions.

**RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES:** There are lots of different recruitment strategies you can use to find employees. The best way to find employees is often by “word of mouth.” Ask your family, friends, and co-workers if they know someone who is available and who might be interested in working with you. Remember, you can have most family members (except parents, spouses and children) work for you.

You can also create a flyer that describes who you are looking for and post it in local areas such as your church, library, etc. You can also call your local day care or college to see if they have a place you can post your information. You can place ads in newspapers. If you don’t know which paper to use, you can call your library for advice. DMR also has two recruitment services available to help you find employees.

**Rewarding Work** is an on-line web-based computer system that lists employees who are seeking work as personal assistants or for other types of community-based, in-home work, in Connecticut. **CT Healthjobs** is another online recruitment tool that lists people who are looking for jobs in the broader healthcare field. Your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) can help you access either one of these Internet tools.

*more choices*



*“I want the staff that I hire to look at me when I’m talking to them, not my mom. I’m in control ... I’m the man!”*

CHRISTIAN SCHIPANI, Consumer

## Recruiting Employees, CONTINUED

**INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES:** Interviewing potential employees is both an art and a science. The art is *“going with your gut.”* The science is asking questions carefully tailored to determine the ability of the person to meet your needs. Your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) can provide you with useful tips to think about when you do phone screenings and face-to-face interviews. She or he can also provide you with some advice about how to answer questions that may come up in the interviews, such as requests to be paid *“under the table,”* or requests to be paid *“as an independent contractor.”*

We recommend that you have each potential job candidate that you think you might hire complete a DMR application form. You will save time if you have potential hires complete the application during the interview process. This form is important because it asks job candidates to give you permission to complete background and reference checks. You are required to complete background checks on any individual you choose to hire. More information about background checks is included in the next section of this guide.

Don't forget that your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) can assist you with recruitment and interviewing activities. However, you will want to take a lead role in finding and interviewing employees so that job candidates know right from the start that ***you are the boss!***



This may be a good time to take a break and make sure you understand everything that you've read so far. You should feel free to ask questions. ***It's also good idea to pause and take a break after you've finished your recruitment activities, so that you can stop and reflect before you offer someone a job.*** During this pause, you can ask yourself, *“Is this the person I REALLY want to hire?”*



## SECTION 6

### Hiring Employees

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*This section of the guide provides information that will help to make sure that your employees are paid in a timely and accurate way.*

Employee Qualification  
& Background Checks

Employee Agreements and  
Other Employee Paperwork

Timesheets & Paychecks

Reimbursements  
and Other Payments

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# Hiring Employees

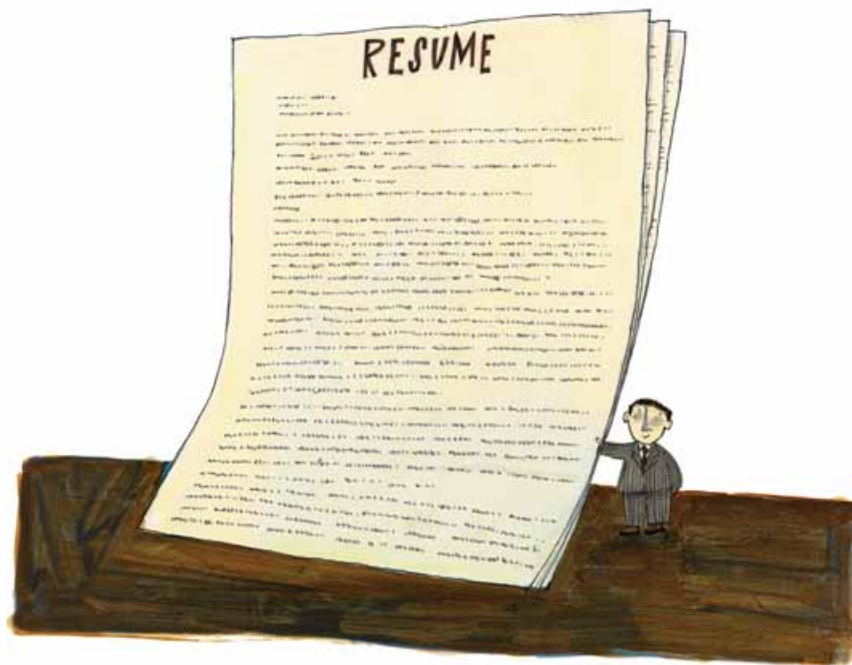
**Congratulations! You've found an employee you want to hire!** You've done a great job recruiting and interviewing potential employees and have found a job candidate you think will meet your needs. ***You're ready to offer an applicant a job!***

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## EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATION AND BACKGROUND CHECKS:

Before you offer a position to a potential employee, you will want to make sure that the person is qualified to provide waiver services to you. DMR has established standard requirements to make sure that any employee providing services to you is able to provide you with safe, quality services. You will need to make sure that the person you want to hire meets the waiver qualifications for the service that she or he will deliver.

You will also want to make sure that you have information about the applicant's background. You can do this by completing required background checks and by checking the references your applicants gives you. Required background checks include a DMR Registry check, a criminal background check, and a motor vehicle check if the employee will be providing you with transportation. Your FI will assist you to check an applicant's qualifications and to complete necessary background checks.



## **EMPLOYEE AGREEMENTS AND OTHER EMPLOYEE PAPERWORK:**

The good news is that you have found someone to hire and this person has agreed to provide services to you. However, there is just a little more paperwork to be completed before your employee can start to work for you, or receive a paycheck.

Your FI will not be able to begin processing payroll for your employee until they receive a copy of the DMR application, completed background check information and other employee payroll forms such as a W-4, and W-9, forms.

Each employee will also need to sign a HCBS waiver agreement form. You or your sponsoring person will also need to complete and sign an employee agreement form and a provider qualification and training verification form with each employee you hire. The employee agreement form describes the pay, hours and work that will be performed by the

employee. The provider qualification and training verification form shows that the employee meets the necessary qualifications and has received all of the training that is listed in your Individual Plan. The FI will give the person you want to hire all the forms that need to be signed and can explain to your employees what all of this information means.

## **TIME SHEETS AND PAYCHECKS:**

Being a good boss means making sure your employees are paid on time and making sure that they receive reimbursement for things such as mileage or program expenses that they have been told that you will pay for out of your budget. It is your job to make sure that timesheets and receipts get to the FI when they are supposed to, so that the FI can send paychecks and reimbursement checks to your employees according to schedule.

*Being a good boss means making sure your employees are paid on time. Remember . . . you can use your FI to help you with your paperwork.*

## Hiring Employees, CONTINUED

Your FI will provide you with timesheets for each employee you hire. You are responsible for mailing or faxing timesheets to your FI for each employee that has worked for you in a designated time period. On occasion it may be necessary for your FI to return a timesheet to you because of an error. This may result in an employee's paycheck being delayed. Neither DMR nor the FI are responsible for delays in payment caused by errors, late submissions, incomplete or illegible forms, or neglect by the employee to inform the FI of changes in address, etc. However, your case manager, DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) will assist you to resolve employee issues or concerns.

There are labor laws that must be followed if staff work overtime. You should contact your FI if you have any questions about overtime hours. You can adjust staff hours from week to week, as long as you stay within your budget. If you need to increase staff hours and this change will result in a change in your budget you will need to contact your case manager or broker so that the proper documentation can be completed. Also, remember that some changes in your individual budget must be submitted and approved by DMR before the change can be made, so make sure you speak to your case manager or broker right away.



### *Remember . . .*

*to check with your case manager or DMR broker if you aren't sure if an expense can be included in your budget, or if it can be reimbursed. It's also important to closely review your monthly budget reports you receive from your FI, to help make sure you are staying within your budget.*

## REIMBURSEMENTS AND OTHER PAYMENTS:

You can use your individual budget funds to reimburse your employees expenses such as parking, mileage, etc. **only when it is an approved line item expense** in your individual budget. Your FI will explain the process you need to follow in order to get allowed items reimbursed. It is your responsibility as the employer to make sure that you are clear with your employees about which expenses will be reimbursed, and what is not covered. Agency vendors that provide services to you must submit a payment invoice to your FI. Agency vendors cannot be paid unless this cost has been authorized in your Individual budget.



Your FI will pay invoices they receive and will provide paychecks to your employees based upon what has been authorized in your Individual Budget. You will need to check with your FI about payment schedules. Your FI has some limitations of what they can pay.

### ***Your FI cannot make the following payments:***

- Payments that have not been authorized in your Individual Plan.
- Payments that exceed waiver cost standards or established rates.
- Employee hours not included in timesheets.
- The total number of hours for all employees combined cannot exceed the authorized number of hours identified in your Individual Plan.
- Reimbursement for items that do not have an acceptable receipt.

## Hiring Employees, CONTINUED



*Remember to check with your case manager or DMR broker if you aren't sure if an expense can be included in your budget.*



*All of the required forms and paperwork are available from your case manager or DMR broker. They can also be downloaded and printed from the DMR website by going to:*

<http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/HCBS/index.htm>



# SECTION 7

## Managing Employees

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*This section of the guide provides information that will help make sure your employees provide effective supports to you.*

Feedback to Employees

Performance Evaluations

Ongoing Training

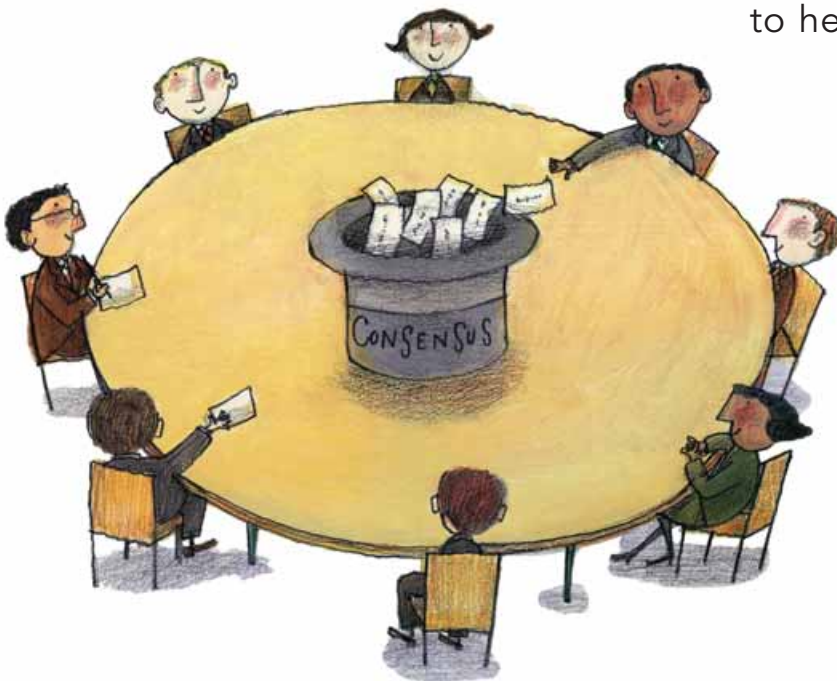
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# Managing Employees

We know that you want to be a good boss. ***So we've developed some training and technical assistance supports to help you to train and supervise your employees.***

**FEEDBACK TO EMPLOYEES:** A good boss provides frequent and timely feedback to employees to let them know whether or not you are satisfied with the services that they are providing. In any good relationship, communication is key to keeping it good. The best advice that we can give to you as the employer of the people you hire is to communicate clearly and openly with them. If you see something that you do not like or are uncomfortable with, let your feelings be known, in a clear, direct, and respectful manner.

Many people who hire their own staff often become very close to the individuals they hire. This can make the relationship very rewarding, but also complicated. Supervising someone who you depend on can be hard, because it can be confusing to be "the boss" for people you care about and who care about you. The key to being an effective supervisor is taking the time to deal with issues as they come up rather than allowing them to grow into big problems. Your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) can provide you with useful tips on giving feedback to employees and can provide assistance to help you resolve conflicts.



### PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS:

Performance evaluations are a more structured way of providing feedback to your staff. Performance evaluations are a good way to keep the balance between “friends” and having an employer/employee relationship. It’s probably a good idea to do a performance evaluation three months after a new employee starts the job and then twice a year after that. This can be a formal process, or can be done in a more informal manner. You can ask your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) to help you do this. If you purchase services from a traditional Vendor Agency you can check to see if they will let you participate in the staff evaluation process. You should have a partnership role in the evaluation of staff, if your staff has been hired through an Agency With Choice.

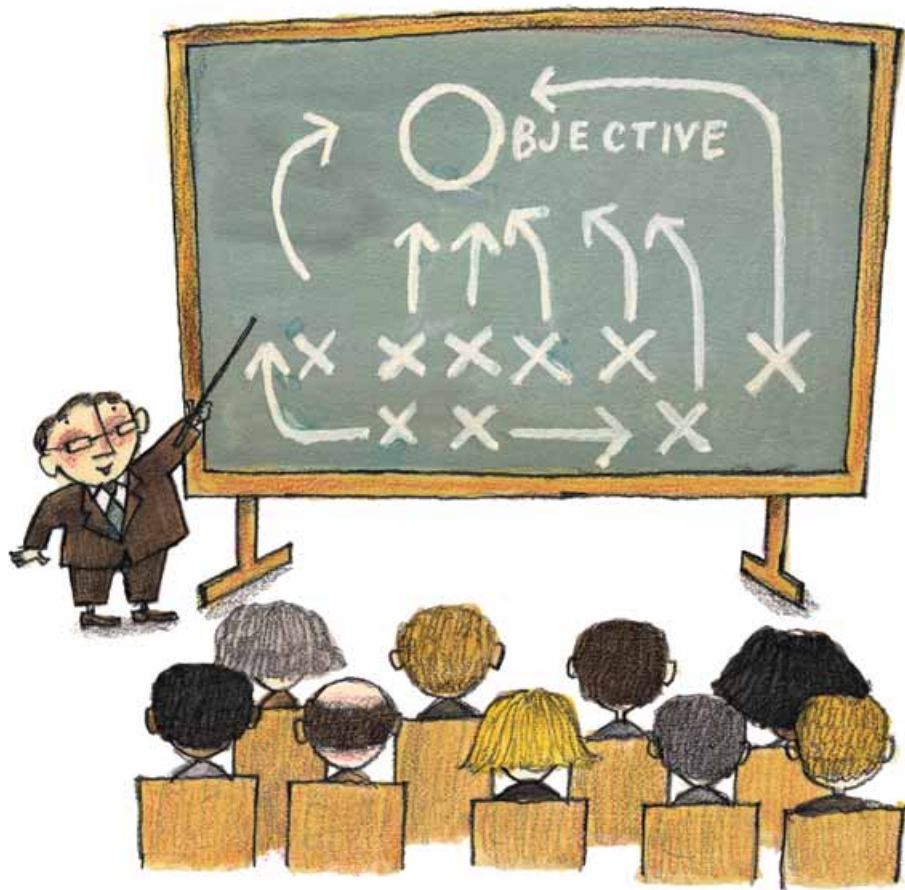
It’s a good idea to get help from your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) if you decide you have to give an employee a warning, or if you decide you must terminate an individual’s employment with you. Your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) can provide you with good advice about what to do to help make sure these types of conversations occur in as comfortable a manner as possible. Also, don’t forget to give your employees positive feedback. You may want to consider giving an employee a raise or bonus, if you are pleased with the service he or she provides. If you want to do this, you will want to work closely with your case manager or broker to make sure you have enough money in your budget to cover these costs and to make sure that you are following all of DMR’s rules and procedures for giving raises or bonuses.

*In any good relationship, communication is key to keeping it good . . .*

## Managing Employees, CONTINUED

**ONGOING TRAINING:** A good boss provides the training needed to help make sure that employees are growing in their job and are satisfied with the work that they do. We have developed some fact sheets and other materials that you can use to help supervise and train your employees and will periodically offer learning opportunities that

both you and your employees can attend. You can contact your regional Self Determination Director to ask about training materials and learning opportunities. The Self Determination Directors are also available to help provide guidance and technical assistance to help you better self-direct your supports and service.



*You can contact your regional Self Determination Director to ask about training materials and learning opportunities. The Self Determination Directors are also available to help provide guidance and technical assistance to help you better self-direct your supports and service.*



## SECTION 8

### Maintaining Quality

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*This section of the guide provides you with things you can do to help maintain the quality of the supports and services provided to you.*

A Strong Circle of Support

Your Individual Plan

Case Management

Quality Service Review

Consumer &  
Family Participation

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## Maintaining Quality

It is important to regularly think about the quality of the services you are receiving and if you are satisfied with them. **You are the expert in what you need and what you expect from your services!**

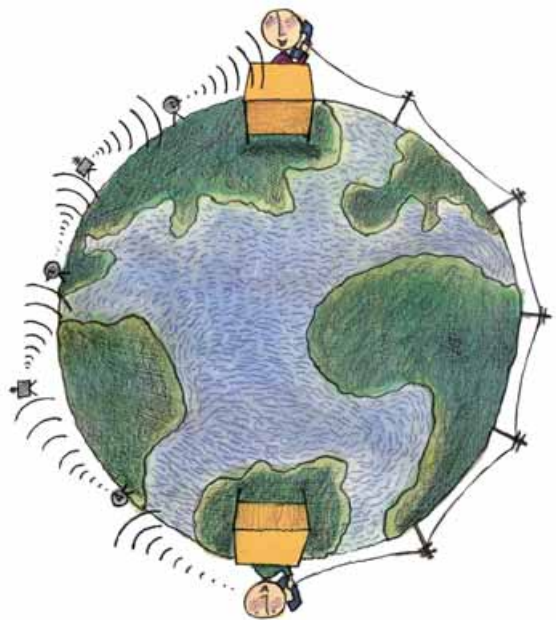
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### A STRONG CIRCLE OF SUPPORT:

We believe that you have the greatest chance of living a safe, healthy, and happy life when you are surrounded by a strong circle of support made up of individuals on your Planning Support Team (PST) who care deeply about you. A circle of support is a network of people who help improve the quality of your life by providing you with positive and productive relationships and a variety of different kinds of support. Circle of support members can be family members, friends, neighbors, people from your work or community, etc.

One of the reasons that we are happy to offer the self-direction option is so that you have more opportunities to hire people who know you well and who can be strong contributors to your circle of support. The self-direction option also provides you with a flexible budget and other supports that you can use to help

support circle development activities. We encourage you to use these resources to help you find new circle members and to help you strengthen existing circle relationships. For example, you can ask your DMR broker or independent broker (FICS) to help you to implement team building activities to help keep your circle of support members committed to helping you succeed in attaining your vision of success.



*We encourage you to use these resources to help you find new circle members and to help you strengthen existing team relationships . . .*

**INDIVIDUAL PLANNING:** We also believe that an effective individual planning process should result in helping you improve the quality of your life. It is your responsibility to be an active participant in your planning process. Your participation in the Individual Planning process is key to making the individual planning process work.

A good quality IP will identify all of the supports you need to communicate with your planning team members what you want and need and how you want your life to get better. This is important so that over time you can

improve your ability to be an effective planning team member. Improvement in team member effectiveness will increase the likelihood that your planning meetings help lead to the results that you want to achieve in your life.



**CASE MANAGEMENT:** Case management services are another important line of defense in helping to improve the quality of your life. Your case manager or broker is responsible for working with you to monitor your waiver services and to make sure you are healthy and safe. Case management services are provided

to anyone who receives waiver services. Your case manager or broker is required to contact you on a regular basis. The frequency of contact will be based upon the type of setting you live in (CLA, Supported Living, Family Home, etc.) and on the types of waiver services you receive. You should feel free to contact

your case manager or broker whenever you need help to maintain or improve the quality of the services provided to you.

## Maintaining Quality, CONTINUED

### QUALITY SERVICE REVIEW (QSR):

Whether you are using a Qualified Agency Vendor, an Agency With Choice, or are hiring your own supports, the department regularly reviews all providers in a formal process called Quality Service Review. Your case manager and members of the quality review team will be involved in the review of the services and supports you receive.

The Quality Review Team may develop recommendations as part of the service review. You may be asked to develop a quality improvement plan based upon these recommendations. Implementation of these recommendations should help you to enhance the quality of your life. Your case manager or broker can provide you with more detailed information about the QSR process.

*They will be gathering information in several ways which may include:*

- interviewing you and your family
- interviewing your employees
- observing your employees while they provide your supports
- reviewing your individual plan, budget and other paperwork
- looking at documentation of the work your employees have done (time sheets, daily logs, etc.)
- conducting a safety review.

**CONSUMER PARTICIPATION:** We have also developed many new ways for consumers like you to get involved with DMR. There are opportunities for you to participate in interviews, get your voice heard in various committees, assist with training provided by the agency and participate in quality activities. You should contact your regional Self Determination Director if you are interested in learning more about how you can be involved and influence what is happening at DMR.





## SECTION 9

### Other Safeguards and Your Rights

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*This section describes other safeguards that DMR has put in place to protect your rights and to help keep you safe, healthy, and satisfied with the supports and services you receive.*

DMR Policies, Procedures  
and Administrative Processes

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Summary

## Other Safeguards and Your Rights

We want you to be **safe, healthy and satisfied** with the supports and services you receive. ***We've developed a system of safeguards to help protect you.***

---

### DMR POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES:

DMR has developed some important policies and procedures that will help safeguard your services. One important process that you should know about is the Incident Reporting For People Who Live in Their Own or Family Homes. This process requires that you or your employees report information to your case manager about the following incidents if they happen when an employee is with you:

- severe injury
- unexpected hospitalization
- if you are lost or missing and the police have been notified
- if a fire started and needed to be put out by the fire department
- if you are arrested
- if you are a victim of theft or physical assault
- if you are involved in a vehicle accident and have a moderate or severe injury,
- or if you need to be restrained.
- all deaths and suspected abuse and neglect incidents must also be reported.

DMR will use information about critical incidents to make sure that whatever happened has been taken care of and to see if there are things DMR could do to prevent new incidents in the future.

If you are a person who needs help managing your behavior so that you do not hurt yourself or others, DMR also coordinates two committees that can help ensure that you have effective quality supports. The Program Review Committee, or PRC, is responsible to review any behavior program that may restrict your rights, including a review of any medication that may restrict your rights or be harmful to you if it is not used in the right way. A Human Rights Committee, or HRC, is also made up of individual, family, provider and community members who make sure that DMR, providers, or employees do not restrict any of your rights as a citizen unless absolutely necessary to keep you or others safe. You can ask your case manager or broker to provide you with copies of the PRC and HRC policies and procedures that explain how these committees operate.

# Other Safeguards and Your Rights

## YOUR RIGHTS AND

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** As someone who is receiving HCBS Waiver Services, you have some Basic Rights and Responsibilities.

### *You have the right to:*

- Be safe
- Be treated with respect
- Have your service options explained to you in a way you understand
- Express your personal desires
- Privacy
- Be free from physical and mental abuse
- Speak up and complain if you don't like something without fear of negative consequences
- Be informed if there are changes that affect you
- Appeal a decision about your service options

### *You are responsible for:*

- Being actively involved in developing your Individual Plan
- Letting your case manager know if your situation changes (e.g. you moved, or you are no longer eligible for Medicaid, your supports needs change)
- Respecting others, as you want to be respected

If you do not agree with service decisions made by DMR, there are a number of ways you can have a decision reviewed.

If you do not agree, you can:

**Regional Office** – Call your Regional Office and ask to have a Supervisor or Assistant Regional director review your concerns

**Programmatic Administrative Review** – Request a Programmatic Administrative Review (PAR) by the Regional Director

**Fair Hearing Request** – Complete and return a Fair Hearing Request through DSS if one is sent to you when a decision is made about waiver services you wanted

**Independent DMR Ombudsperson** – Contact the Independent Ombudsmen at: (860) 418-6047 (Hartford) or (866-) 737-0331 (Toll Free)

Your case manager or broker can help you arrange these options if needed. We want decisions to be fair and equitable so talk to someone at DMR if you don't agree with something about your supports.

# SUMMARY

**The department is committed to helping people with intellectual disabilities live full, satisfying and safe lives in their communities.** We understand how important it is for you to be able to choose how you want to live your life. We hope this guide provides you with useful information about our new systems that allow you more choice and control and helps you to understand the resources that are available to assist you in your new role as employer.

**While hiring and managing your own staff may seem confusing or overwhelming at first, you can count on lots of people to assist you along the way.** Your case manager or DMR broker will help you to create a vision of your future and help plan for the supports and services you need. She or he will help you to participate in your IP meetings and will help keep track of your waiver, IP, and individual budget documentation. Your DMR broker or Independent Broker (FICS) will help you recruit, hire and manage your employees. Your FI will provide all the assistance you need to pay employees and manage your budget, and your regional Self Determination Director and others will be available to provide you with training and technical assistance, as needed.

**Self-direction will provide you with many opportunities to create the lifestyle you want to achieve.** We hope you enjoy your self-direction experience and achieve great satisfaction from all that you accomplish. And, if you need more information, always remember to contact your DMR case manager or broker.



# APPENDICES

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A Helpful Checklist

Acronyms and Definitions

Frequently Asked Questions

Useful Resources

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# A Helpful Checklist



## A Summary of My Hiring Choices

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1. How do I want my services managed?</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Vendor Agency<br><input type="checkbox"/> Agency With Choice<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hire & Manage My Own Employees<br><input type="checkbox"/> A Combination of Above  |
| <b>2. How do I want to receive support for hiring and managing employees?</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> DMR Broker<br><input type="checkbox"/> Independent Broker (FICS)  |
| <b>3. What Fiscal Intermediary do I want to help me manage my employer of record responsibilities?</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Allied Community Resources, Inc.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Public Partnerships, Inc.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Remesa Sunset Shores, Inc.   |
| <b>4. What supports and services need to be listed in my Individual Plan and what do I need to include in my individual budget to support my Individual Plan?</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver Services<br><input type="checkbox"/> Service Providers<br><input type="checkbox"/> Qualifications & Training<br><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Back-Up<br><input type="checkbox"/> Employee Wages<br><input type="checkbox"/> Worker's Compensation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment and Training Costs<br><input type="checkbox"/> Insurance<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <b>5. Who will sign my Individual Service Agreement?</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> My Signature or,<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sponsoring Person Signature  |
| <b>6. What strategies do I want to use to recruit employees?</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisements<br><input type="checkbox"/> Job Descriptions<br><input type="checkbox"/> Interview Questions<br><input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment Websites  |

## A Summary of My Hiring Choices

**7. Who do I want to hire?**

- ☐ Waiver Service Qualifications
- ☐ Required Training
- ☐ Background Checks

**8. What additional training do I want to provide?**

- ☐ Information about me
- ☐ Other training

**9. How will I provide feedback to my employees?**

- ☐ Informal feedback
- ☐ Formal written feedback

**10. What will I do to improve the quality of services I receive?**

- ☐ Quality Improvement Plan
- ☐ Quality Volunteer Opportunities

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q** *How can I find out which agency is a traditional agency vendor, which agencies are an Agency With Choice, and which agencies are able to provide FICS services?*

**A** Your case manager or DMR broker has a list of all these agencies and can provide you with a copy if you need one.

**Q** *Can I keep my broker as my case manager, if I hire an independent broker (FICS)?*

**A** No, the independent broker (FICS) is only intended to be used if you do not use a DMR broker. The DMR broker is expected to do the same kinds of activities as the independent broker (FICS), so that would be duplicating the service. And, DMR needs to make sure that people who want a DMR broker will be able to get one who has the time to provide those extra supports, so has to be careful that the DMR broker doesn't get too many people to support at one time.

**Q** *Can I get more money in my budget so I can hire an independent broker (FICS)?*

**A** Initially you will need to build the independent broker (FICS) into your individual budget from the allocation you were provided. If at some later point in time you need more support from the independent broker (FICS) than originally planned for to protect your health and welfare, ask your case manager to submit a request for more services through the Regional Planning and Resource Allocation Team.

**Q** *Can I change my mind and return to using a traditional vendor if I decide self-direction isn't for me?*

**A** Yes, you can change your mind and change to another type of vendor or to another support person at any time.

## Questions That Your Employees May Ask You



**Q** *Since the funds that you use to pay me come from the state, does that mean I am a state employee?*

**A** No, I am your employer of record.

**Q** *Since my checks come from the FI, does that mean I work for them?*

**A** No, I am your employer of record.

## Frequently Used Acronyms

<b>DMR</b>	Department of Mental Retardation
<b>FI</b>	Fiscal Intermediary
<b>FICS</b>	Family and Individual Consultation Service
<b>HCBS</b>	Home and Community Based Services
<b>HRC</b>	Human Rights Committee
<b>IP</b>	Individual Plan
<b>IS</b>	Individual Support
<b>ISA</b>	Individual Support Agreement
<b>LON</b>	Level of Need
<b>PAR</b>	Programmatic Administrative Review
<b>PRAT</b>	Planning and Review Allocation Team
<b>PRC</b>	Program Review Committee
<b>PST</b>	Planning and Support Team
<b>QSR</b>	Quality Service Review

## Fact Sheets, Internet Sites & Other Useful Resources

<i>Category</i>	<i>Resource</i>
<b>SELF DETERMINATION AND PERSON CENTERED PLANNING:</b>	<p><b>Self Determination Fact Sheet</b> <a href="http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_sdo.pdf">http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_sdo.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Person Centered Planning Fact Sheet</b> <a href="http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_pcp.pdf">http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_pcp.pdf</a></p> <p><b>It's My Choice . . .</b> by William T. Allen, Ph.D. (2002) <a href="http://www.allenshea.com">www.allenshea.com</a></p> <p><b>A Decision-Making Guide Developed for the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities</b> <a href="http://www.mncdd.org">www.mncdd.org</a></p>
<b>HIRING AND MANAGING YOUR OWN SUPPORTS:</b>	<p><b>DMR Registry Fact Sheet</b> <a href="http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_registry.pdf">http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_registry.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Hiring and Managing Your Own Supports Fact Sheet</b> <a href="http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_hiring.pdf">http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_hiring.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Using a Fiscal Intermediary Fact Sheet</b> <a href="http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_fiscalint.pdf">http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_fiscalint.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Criminal History and Background Check Fact Sheet</b> <a href="http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_crimhis.pdf">http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_crimhis.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance Fact Sheet</b> <a href="http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_empsafety.pdf">http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/publications/centralofc/fact_sheets/ifs_empsafety.pdf</a></p>

## *Category*

## *Resource*

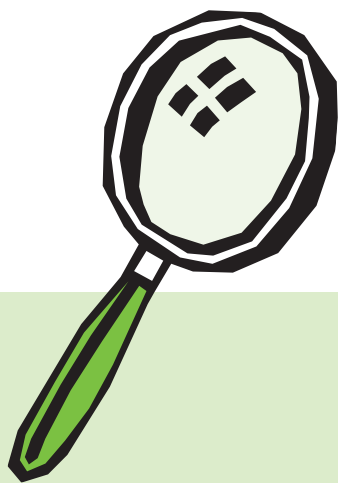
### **HIRING AND MANAGING YOUR OWN SUPPORTS: CONTINUED**

Waiting List Settlement Agreement  
<http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/WLSettlement.htm>  
[fact\\_sheets/ifs\\_registry.pdf](http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/fact_sheets/ifs_registry.pdf)

Employee Recruitment Websites  
<http://www.rewardingwork.org>  
<http://www.cthealthjobs.org>

"Help at Home: A Guide to Finding  
and Keeping Your Caregiver"  
Published by Homeshare, Burlington, VT  
<http://www.homesharevermont.org/>

Website devoted to the needs and interests  
of direct support workers  
<http://rtc.umn.edu/dsp-9k>  
<http://www.collegeofdirectsupport.com>





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